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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5933
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4009
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 6971
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2953
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 9110
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHFJSCC/COMMARFORPAC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 001869

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PACOM FOR FPA HUSO
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: OUR LATEST CHALLENGE: INTRODUCTION OF EMERGENCY
DECREE

REF: A. JOHN-ARVIZU E-MAIL 3/28
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 1587

Classified By: CDA Alex A. Arvizu, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Charge urged the foreign minister and the coup council Secretary-General not to invoke emergency rule in Bangkok. GEN Winai explained that the government needed the additional measures, which fell short of reinstituting martial law, to prevent further destabilizing efforts from pro-Thaksin elements. The foreign minister asked the US to support Thai during the difficult transition period. He expressed concern over the activities of former PM Thaksin in the US. Other embassy offices have also underscored our concerns about the emergency decree with counterparts. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge met March 28 with Council for National Security Secretary-General Winai Phattiyakul on the margins of a

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social event. Charge asked GEN Winai whether the emergency measures would be applied in Bangkok. Winai responded that he believed they would be. He agreed with our assessment that the demonstrations carried out so far were small and not threatening, but warned that future demonstrations could be destabilizing. He distinguished between the various groups of demonstrators: the government/CNS has no problem with the "pure" democrats, like some of the academic-led protests (ref B). They also understood that some groups, like the poor farmers currently protesting, had economic grievances (from the debt they had piled up due to former PM Thaksin's policies, he emphasized). But they could not tolerate "former political figures" using demonstrations in this way. Currently, the government had limited legal means to stop the protests. Police could confiscate microphones or other equipment, but they could not lock the demonstrators up, so they just returned to demonstrate again. Winai said that they did not want to introduce martial law again, as this was excessive. But they needed some teeth in the measures they could use against protesters, and the 2005 Emergency Decree would be an 'intermediate step' short of martial law. The Charge urged the CNS to reconsider, emphasizing that we saw

no justification for the introduction of a state of emergency now.

13. (C) Charge also spoke to Foreign Minister Nitya Phibulsonggram on March 29, at a ceremonial event to commemorate US-Thai law enforcement cooperation. FM Nitya noted that the Thai Ambassador in the US had conveyed the concerns expressed by EAP DAS John regarding the emergency decree. Nitya asked that the US not "pre-judge" the outcome of the process. He said that political developments would have their "ups and downs" over the coming months, and Thailand needed the US to offer support. Charge responded that this was exactly what we were trying to do, by encouraging the government to stay the course on return to elected government, and to speed it up wherever possible. Nitya expressed "disappointment" with the US position, especially any consideration of canceling the upcoming Cobra Gold exercise, a subject that had come up in DAS John's conversation with the Thai ambassador. The Charge responded that we were not "threatening"; rather, by raising the possibility of invoking the emergency decree, the RTG was introducing complications into the political process here that could affect our relationship. The FM expressed his unhappiness that former PM Thaksin was using his hired consultants to gain access to opinion leaders in the US. He threw up his hands: "So basically, you can buy access in DC?" he asked. "Maybe we should get ourselves a PR firm." Nitya underscored to Charge that, despite Thaksin's efforts, he "was not coming back," adding, "He doesn't have a future here; you know that, right?"

14. (C) Also on March 29, Charge discussed the possible emergency decree with the Japanese Embassy DCM. Charge explained our concerns about the effect such a step would have on the unfolding political process. The Japanese DCM

BANGKOK 00001869 002 OF 002

agreed; he said they were surprised to read about the emergency decree in the press, and thought it unnecessary in light of the current political and security environment. Charge asked if, in light of PM Surayud's visit to Japan early next week for the Japan-Thai FTA signing, the GOJ could look for an opportunity to register their concerns with the PM. The DCM promised to take this on board.

15. (C) DATT and JUSMAG have also discussed concerns over this issue with their military contacts, and emboffs have underscored to political and civil society contacts that we are worried about the possible results if the emergency declaration goes forward, both on the US-Thai relations, and on the tense political situation here.

ARVIZU